

PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2000

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:22 p.m. at Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

PRESENT, COMMISSIONERS: Peirona, Mathewson, Phillips, Parsons

ABSENT, COMMISSIONERS: Wiecha, Purcell

PRESENT, STAFF: Director Vanderprien, Contract Planner Haag, Contract Planner Knapp, City Attorney Savaree, Recording Secretary Wong

AGENDA STUDY SESSION: None.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS: None.

COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments): None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Action Minutes of February 1, 1999

MOTION: By Commissioner Mathewson, seconded by Commissioner Phillips to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed.

_Public Hearing - 2101 Coronet Blvd.; To consider a side and rear yard setback variance and design review to allow 4'2" on the south side where 6' is required and 6' rear setback where 15' is required to allow an approximate 1,285 sq. ft. ground and second floor addition to an existing home (Appl. No. 99-1133); APN: 044-041-140; Zoning: R-1B; CEQA Status: Exempt; Oreste Cavallini (Applicant); Katherine Anderson (Owner)

Contract Planner Knapp presented the staff report recommending approval with conditions and added two conditions: 1) the rear deck shall not encroach into the 6' rear yard setback and 2) if the south wall ends up being demolished during construction then reconstruction shall honor the 6' required side yard setback. Chair Parsons asked Contract Planner Knapp if there was a site plan which showed the size of the deck to which she replied negatively. Chair Parsons stated that the finished floor elevation of the house appeared to be the same as the existing at elevation 99' and the side yard where the existing garage was located at elevation 104'. Chair Parsons stated that it appeared that a retaining wall would be required on the backside of the driveway, however, this was not shown on the plans. Contract Planner Knapp stated that the Dept. of Public Works had required a grading plan as a condition of approval and the Commission could direct the applicant to submit that for review at a future meeting.

Chair Parsons asked if the applicant would like to speak.

Oreste Cavallini, applicant, stated that his mother-in-law and daughters were the owners of the property. He said that the existing house had a slab foundation. He proposed a one level home with a wooden floor with a crawl space so the finished floor elevation would be about 101. The existing retaining wall was at 3'6", next to the flat spot to the left of the garage. The front of the house would be moved forward a bit and there would be a 3' retaining wall which would bring it to the same level as the existing lawn area. His daughters had lived in the house for two years and his mother-in-law had been living in San Bruno. He said that the existing house was 850 sq. ft.

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing.

Reiner Lenigk, 2103 Coronet Blvd., asked how high the proposed house would be since he had a one story home. He mentioned that he had a tree between the two properties.

Contract Planner Knapp replied that the proposed height would be 24'8" while the maximum height permitted was at 28'.

Chad Stein, 506 Alameda, was concerned as to how close the house would be to the southern corner of the lot.

Mr. Cavallini replied that the building footprint would remain as it was.

MOTION: By Commissioner Peirona, seconded by Commissioner Mathewson to close the public hearing. The motion passed.

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A long discussion ensued between the Commission, staff, and the applicant. Chair Parsons would like to see a grading plan that showed the tops and bottoms of the retaining walls; finished floor elevations for the retaining walls, driveways, and floor levels of the house; and the deck location on the plans. Chair Parsons was concerned about potential drainage into the garage. Mr. Cavallini explained that he planned to cut the walls down to 22" high so there would be a crawl space for furnace ducts, plumbing, etc. Mr. Cavallini planned on moving the front of the house out for the bay windows. He described the grading cuts on the property. Mr. Cavallini stated that a condition of approval was to remove the stump. Director Vanderprien stated that grading in hillside areas was part of the design review process, however, grading was more administrative on the level lots. Director Vanderprien explained the design review process.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Mathewson to reopen and continue the public hearing to March 21, 2000. The motion passed.

AYES: Mathewson, Phillips, Peirona, Parsons

ABSENT: Wiecha, Purcell

The Commission's comments included: concerned about the message the Commission was sending to the applicant and concerned about being consistent with all the applicants and also with the Planning

Division in requesting information ahead of time if it was a concern with the Commission; understood that the total finished grade would be higher than the existing after the applicant explained his project; in favor of the project; and thought this was a unique situation and that the Commission was not sending a wrong signal.

Public Hearing - 2600 Coronet Blvd.; To consider a design review to add 1,797 sq. ft. to the ground floor and basement to an existing single-family home of 1,668 sq. ft. (Appl. No. 99-1149); APN: 044-260-230; Zoning: R-1B; CEQA Status: Exempt; Jorge and Teresa Delgadillo (Applicant/Owner)

Contract Planner Haag presented the staff report recommending approval. Chair Parsons asked if the applicant would like to speak.

Jorge Delgadillo, applicant, responding to Chair Parsons' concerns, said that there were plans for more windows along with a door so it would be habitable space on the lower level with access to the back yard. Had originally thought about excavating under the existing foundation but it was too costly. Mr. Delgadillo planned to keep the existing south wall and foundation as support.

Teresa Delgadillo, applicant, stated that they were not planning to excavate because of cost issues. Responding to condition I.D., she stated that headlights were shining into their household all day and night, and thought about putting reflectors on the fence.

Commissioner Phillips suggested working with staff regarding the landscaping and the fence. Commissioner Phillips suggested putting down railroad ties or something equivalent along the bottom of the fence to create a barrier to keep vehicles from entering their yard.

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing. No one came forward to speak.

Director Vanderpriem stated that the fence was a condition of approval to facilitate backing out of the driveway and to see oncoming cars.

MOTION: By Commissioner Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Mathewson to close the public hearing. The motion passed.

MOTION: By Commissioner Mathewson, seconded by Commissioner Phillips to approve Resolution No. 2000-15 approving a design review application for a single-family residential addition at 2600 Coronet Boulevard:

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AYES: Peirona, Mathewson, Phillips, Parsons

ABSENT: Wiecha, Purcell

Chair Parsons announced that the Commission's decision could be appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

Public Hearing - To consider an amendment to Ordinance No. 360, Section 8, the parking ordinance, to require the upgrade of one-car residential garage to two-car garages when one or more bedrooms is being added (Appl. No. 00-1014); CEQA Status: Exempt; City of Belmont (Applicant)

Chair Parsons announced that he had a request from one of the Councilmembers to take public testimony and continue this item to the next Commission meeting since the Council would be considering 1840 Robin Whipple Way at their next meeting.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Peirona to continue the public hearing to March 21, 2000.

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing.

Elaine Farmer, President, Central Neighborhood Assn., stated that garages were supposed to be used for vehicles and had noticed that people used them for storage, a hobby shop, or a play room. She suggested that the code enforcement officer could drive by and take pictures of how garages were being used. Mrs. Farmer said that there was a recent meeting of the presidents of the homeowner associations and half of their discussion was on the extra cars parked in the streets.

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Director Vanderprie stated that staff had discussed changing the ordinance, similar to some cities, to require that garages be made available for parking. Director Vanderprie said that there would be implications of an ordinance change and how it would be enforced. Director Vanderprie stated that staff could provide some information for discussion at the next meeting. Director Vanderprie said that this might ease the parking in the hillside areas somewhat if people were educated about the need and the requirement to keep the garages clear. A brief discussion ensued between the Commission and staff. Director Vanderprie stated that this item was intermixed with the storage of recreation vehicles, boats, etc. and whether they should be allowed in driveways, and said that he would renote this item with a broader description.

The motion passed.

Public Hearing - To consider public, Commission, and staff comments on the operation of the Single-Family Design Review Ordinance, and direction for any amendments to be considered at a future public hearing (Appl. No. 00-1015); CEQA Status: Exempt; City of Belmont (Applicant)

Chair Parsons suggested opening and continuing this item to the next meeting since two Commissioners were not here tonight and there was one vacancy so that there could be a full discussion on this item.

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner Peirona, seconded by Commissioner Mathewson to continue the public hearing to March 21, 2000. The motion passed

REPORTS, STUDIES, UPDATES, AND COMMENTS

Review Public Comments made during Community Forum at the February 15, 2000 Meeting

Commissioner Phillips stated that he was not at the February 15 meeting, however, he had reviewed the public comments. He suggested explaining the process to the public at the beginning of each meeting. Commissioner Phillips said that he picked up a beautiful Pacific Grove handout on design review, the standards, and criteria. He suggested communicating more to the public and had seen staff constantly

improve this process over the years. Commissioner Phillips suggested a handout explaining the Commission's role, responsibility, and what to expect at a meeting.

Commissioner Peirona thought that it should be known that the Commission might approve or deny a design review application, and that it might take more than one meeting to review the application since additional items might be required.

Commissioner Phillips heard that one City had a study session on a preliminary application of what the applicant was requesting. He explained that the study session would occur at the beginning of a meeting which would not be open for the applicant to give a presentation and where staff gave a very brief presentation. The Commission could ask questions and the applicant could hear the Commission's concerns.

Commissioner Peirona said that it might be frustrating if the applicant was present and couldn't respond to any of the concerns.

Director Vanderprieem stated that there was a flow chart of all of the processes with timelines; brochures on the older processes, however, not on the newer ones such as residential design review; and a checklist for applications. Currently, staff sent a staff report to the applicant/owner on Thursday for the Tuesday hearing. Regarding the comments heard at the prior meeting, staff could give people more time to review the report, however that would mean a hearing date further off and most people would often opt for the sooner hearing date. Director Vanderprieem stated that there used to be a preliminary design review process which was much like what was described at the Planners Institute where notices were sent out and the Commission could give feedback on information the Commission would like to see on the plans. That process worked very well for years. It began to raise some concerns with people in the audience listening as Commissioner Peirona indicated who wanted to comment on the process. In deference to the people who wanted to comment, the Commission began opening it up for comment, and then later staff sent notices so the preliminary design review evolved into a more formal process.

The Commission and staff agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting. In response to Chair Parsons, Director Vanderprieem replied that he would invite Mr. Naser to the workshops on the permitting process.

Commissioner Peirona stated that he would like to have a workshop with his fellow Commissioners to discuss different items in their field and what they perceived if they saw any problems that wasn't agendaized such as "open discussion of Belmont's continued development". Commissioner Phillips suggested a Planning Commission Roundtable. Director Vanderprieem stated that he just discussed this with the City Attorney who said that it could be listed as a "discussion of the development process in Belmont" as long as there was no action taken during the discussion, and only to exchange ideas.

In response to Elaine Farmer, Director Vanderprieem replied that the two people who sat next to him this evening were temporary part-time planners. Mrs. Farmer understood that the temporary planners were to save time and do research for the current staff, however, she noticed that Director Vanderprieem had to ask for some information from one of the temporary planners. Mrs. Farmer asked how responsible were temporary planners if they made a mistake and their suggestions were followed.

Director Vanderpriem stated that if the design review ordinance on the agenda was discussed tonight, then the Commission could have discussed the critical items to be submitted for the application especially if they were not listed in the ordinance. Director Vanderpriem thought that the idea from one of the commissioners about sending out a plan early to them while it was circulated to other Departments for review might resolve some of the concerns. Chair Parsons would like to discuss the application checklist and any other information given to the public when this item returned to the Commission. Director Vanderpriem stated that he would also like to discuss other items related to the design review ordinance such as the floor area ratio ordinance, setbacks, elimination of large vertical walls without setbacks, two story front entrances which don't fit into the neighborhood, second story setbacks, the grading ordinance, and floor plans.

Selection of two Commissioners to serve on the Panel to review the Request for Proposals for Village Center Block 4

Chair Parsons suggested continuing this item to the next meeting when there was a full Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m. to meet for a regular meeting on March 21, 2000.

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Carlos de Melo

Acting Planning Commission Secretary